AN EMBRACING EXCELLENCE FIELD GUIDE

# Who Is Actually In Charge Here?

THE REHEARSAL · THE CHAOS · THE FIX

Everyone runs them. Almost nobody was taught how.

WAYNE & ROSANNE PREVETT

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THE PREMISE

# Nobody Is In Charge, and Everybody Knows It

The theory of a wedding rehearsal is simple. Walk it through the night before, and the ceremony runs smoothly the next day.

In our experience, that is not necessarily true. A rehearsal creates at least as much chaos as it prevents, and it does so reliably, in the same way, at almost every wedding.

> It is the moment the controlling mother of the bride finds her voice, when a bridesmaid discovers she has opinions, when half the party arrives late and the other half does not arrive at all.

None of that is anybody's fault. It is what happens when fifteen people who have never done this before are put in a room with no one visibly leading. Somebody will fill that space. It should be you, and it usually is not.

### This guide is not the method

We are not going to teach you how to run one here. What we are going to do is show you exactly how a rehearsal goes wrong, what it costs when it does, and how to tell whether yours are working. That alone will change your next one.

WHAT'S INSIDE

# Who Is Actually In Charge Here, Section by Section

01 The Premise — Nobody is in charge, and everybody knows it.

Somebody will fill that space.

02 The Six Ways It Falls Apart — You will recognise every one.

None of them are anybody's fault.

03 What It Actually Costs — It is not the evening you lose.

It is what the room decides about you.

04 Why New Officiants Should Do Every One They Can Get

There are do-overs at a rehearsal. There are none on a wedding day.

05 Seven Questions — Answer them about your last rehearsal.

Quickly, and without softening anything.

How to use this guide

Read it before your next rehearsal rather than after. Then answer the seven questions honestly. If you finish it thinking that is exactly what happened last time, that is the correct response.

THE PROBLEM

# The Six Ways It Falls Apart

Rehearsals do not fail creatively. They fail the same six ways, every time, and you will recognise all of them.

- Too many people. Partners of the bridal party, the DJ, the florist, cousins who wanted to watch. Every extra body is another voice and another opinion.
- Everyone briefed at once. One person is not listening, another is on their phone, a third is arguing a point, and nothing lands with anyone.
- The officiant becomes a sheepdog. You end up personally corralling fifteen adults into position, which is both undignified and slow.
- A parent takes over. Usually with good intentions, usually about the processional order, and once it starts you will not get the room back.
- It is run to music, with timing. Which teaches everybody to worry about something you will be controlling tomorrow anyway.
- It is walked four times. By the third pass everyone has stopped concentrating, and the extra repetitions have taught them nothing.

### And then the real problem

Here is the part that stings. Most people forget the details of the rehearsal the moment they leave, because deep down they know somebody will be in charge on the day.

> So a badly run rehearsal does not just fail to help. It consumes an evening, spends everyone's goodwill, and delivers almost nothing that survives to the morning.

THE COST

# It Is Not the Evening You Lose

You will get through it. The rehearsal will end, people will go to dinner, and the wedding will happen. So it is easy to conclude that a chaotic rehearsal is simply an awkward hour and nothing more.

That is not what it is. A rehearsal is the first time most of these people see you work — and there are usually fifteen to twenty of them, including both sets of parents.

### What the room is actually deciding

Not whether you are nice. Whether you are in command. Whether, tomorrow, when somebody's dress catches or a child bolts or the music starts early, this person will handle it.

A wedding party that leaves a rehearsal uncertain about the officiant carries that uncertainty into the ceremony. They watch you instead of the couple. They hesitate at their cues. And the whole thing feels, in a way nobody can name afterwards, slightly unsteady.

> The product of a great rehearsal is not a memorised routine. It is a wedding party that trusts you have it handled.

### And the part that pays you back

Every one of those people knows somebody getting married. So do both sets of parents. A rehearsal you led calmly is twenty people who watched you be excellent at close range — which is a better introduction than any advertisement you will ever pay for.

IF YOU ARE STARTING OUT

# Do Every Single One You Can Get

If you are new, this is the most valuable sentence in the guide.

> Say yes to every rehearsal you are offered. Offer to do them for free until you have mastered your craft, and mean it.

The reason has nothing to do with the couple and everything to do with you. A rehearsal is the only place in this entire profession where you can make a mistake without consequence.

There are do-overs at a rehearsal. There are none on a wedding day.

Every hour you spend leading a room that is not yet the real thing is an hour of experience you will never regret buying — and it is the only realistic way to learn how a room behaves when it is trying to lead itself.

### What we would tell our younger selves

Everything we know about running a rehearsal, we learned by trial and error. We made the mistakes. We saw the chaos. We stood in the middle of rooms that had got away from us and worked out, slowly and in public, what we should have done.

You can skip most of that. Not by reading about it — by volunteering.

THE HONEST PART

# Seven Questions About Your Last Rehearsal

Answer quickly. Do not soften anything — nobody is reading over your shoulder.

- Did you tell the couple, in advance and in writing, who you wanted there?
- Did anyone attend who did not need to be there?
- Did you brief everybody at once, or did you take the couple aside first?
- Who physically moved the wedding party into position — you, or the couple?
- How many times did you walk the processional?
- Was there music? Was anybody watching a clock?
- What was the last thing you said to the whole party before they left — and did it sound like a promise or like a hope?

### How to read your answers

There is no score. But if you hesitated on more than two, the room was probably running you rather than the other way round — and you are in the large majority, including us for the first several years.

THE FIX

# It Is Five Decisions, Not a Personality

The good news is that none of this requires natural authority, a loud voice, or twenty years of experience. A rehearsal can be run beautifully, and the difference is entirely in how you lead it.

It comes down to five decisions, all of them made before you arrive: who is allowed to attend, who you speak to first, who physically places the wedding party, how you walk each group, and what you say at the end.

> Get those five right and you will not merely survive the rehearsal. You will walk away having earned the confidence of everyone who will stand beside the couple the next day.

Those five principles, written out in full with the exact sentences to say, are Chapter Twelve of “I’m Ordained, Now What?” — Book One in this series, and the book for your first ninety days.

### One thing you can do at your next rehearsal

Do not change everything. Change one thing: when you arrive, take the couple away from the group and walk the logistics with just the three of you. When the bridesmaids or the mothers try to join, say kindly and firmly — not yet, it is just the three of us for now.

That single move will save you more than the other four combined. We promise.

> Everything here points one way. Book One — I’m Ordained, Now What? carries the five principles in full, plus the first ninety days either side of them.

NOW WHAT?

# There is a next step.

Over thirty years we have trained and certified more than 2,000 officiants and celebrants. We are more than a ‘get ordained online’ organization — we care deeply about the people we invest in. Wherever you are in your journey, there is a next step, and we would like to walk it with you.

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